DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 242 SO 023 281

AUTHOR McCarthy, Joseph M.
TITLE Innovation in Late Medieval Educational Thought: Vincent of Beauvais, Ramon Lull, and Pierre Dubois.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Medieval Forum (April 19, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Rearing; *Christianity; Critical Thinking; Educational Development; Educational History; Educational Philosophy; *Educational Practices; *Educational Theories; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *History Instruction; Intercultural Communication; *Medieval History; Multilingualism; Social Change; Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS Dubois (Pierre); Europe; *Lull (Ramon); Missionaries; *Vincent de Beauvais

ABSTRACT

The agenda of 13th and 14th century educational theorists embraced issues that stimulated innovation in educational theory and practice. Christian thinkers of the late middle ages were preoccupied with adapting their educational notions to the changing conditions of their socio-political milieu. The question of the training of Christian rulers generated an extensive literature. Vincent de Beauvais, educational consultant to the family of Louis IX, wrote a practical manual of child rearing with a view to the everyday pedagogic practice necessary to prepare 11 children for their leadership role in society. His treatment of the nature and use of history was innovative. He understood the incompleteness and falsity of many sources and used them critically. He avoided the allegorical mode of interpretation in favor of the literal sense. On education of women he wrote extensively on practical reality. Ramon Lull displayed creativity in his educational views by founding language schools for the preparation of missionaries. His innovation in educational theory and practice was necessitated by Christian purposes. He was alone in attaching importance to Muslin attitudes and culture, as well as training in Arabic for missionaries. Pierre Dubois gave the concept of education for women an interesting twist by proposing that females be trained in languages, medicine, and surgery before being sent to the Holy Land. Once there they would be married off to wealthy Easterners and convert their husbands to Christianity. He was not developing a theory of education for women, but proposing a novel strategy for crusade. (DK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SO

ED360242

INNOVATION IN LATE MEDIEVAL EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT: VINCENT OF BEAUVAIS, RAMON LULL AND PIERRE DUBOIS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
JOSEPH M. McCARTHY
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Joseph M. McCarthy

Suffolk University

Paper presented at the Medieval Forum
Plymouth State College, April 19, 1991

SO 023 281

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are usually given short shrift by historians of education, who tend to celebrate the twelfth and fifteenth centuries as eras of immensely significant theoretical and practical innovation in education and ignore the interval between. Textbooks ignore the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries almost entirely, apart from attention to the universities. This is true of even those texts most sympathetic to tne process of development of medieval education: once the Twelfth Century Renaissance is disposed of, there is little room for anything but higher education, apart from perhaps a bit of attention to Thomas Aquinas' De Magistro and a paragraph or so deploring the supposed absence of a theory of lay education.[1] As for writers of scholarly articles and monographs, the development of universities seems almost exclusively to dominate their approach to these centuries, with a little attention to the tendency toward theoretical consolidation in a age of summae. In fact, the agenda of educational theorists was considerably richer than these traditions of presentation would indicate, embracing pressing issues that stimulated a good deal of innovation in educational theory and practice. To overemphasize the roots of the Great Renaissance in the culture of Greece and Rome is to miss the extent to which those roots were firmly anchored in

the preoccupations of Christian thinkers of the late Middle Ages with adapting their educational notions to the changing conditions of their socio-political milieu.

One of these issues, and one with a long and rich history, was the question of the role and training of the Christian ruler, a subject which had already generated an extensive Fuerstenspiegel literature.[2] In the thirteenth century, Vincent de Beauvais (1190-1264?), largely unacquainted with this literature, sought to produce a four-part mirror of princes of which two parts survive, De morali principis institutione and De eruditione filiorum nobilium,[3] the latter of which is particularly interesting for our purposes by reason of the circumstances of its composition. As lector or educational consultant[4] to the family of Louis IX, Vincent had to write not in utopian terms but with a view to the everyday pedagogic practice necessary to prepare eleven children for their leadership role in society. If De morali is a treatise in political theory with implications for training rulers, De eruditione is a practical manual of child-rearing. Because of his audience and aims, Vincent, despite his method of composition (which some have derided as cut and paste), embodied some of the more progressive trends of his time, achieving a measure of creativity and innovation that is noteworthy.

One aspect of this is his treatment of the nature and use of history. Though he avoided discussing the role of history in the

curriculum, Vincent was intrigued by the educational uses of history and was no mere annalist or chronicler or collector of naive and fabulous tales. He understood the incompleteness and falsity of many sources and used them critically. He developed a hierarchy of sources beginning with scripture, canons, decretals, conciliar legislation, and ranging through doctors of the Church to uncanonized Christian writers to pagan writers.[5] He did not invent such a procedure and schema, which is visible in the methodology of ancient Roman jurisprudence, the work of legal reformers of the previous century, and other medieval historians, but the fact that he committed to its use put him in the ranks of the more rigorous historians of his age. It is clear that he avoided the allegorical mode of interpretation in favor of the literal sense, a measure of his intellectual independence when the other than literal senses were favord by his fellow Dominicans.[6] His usage in De morali clearly indicates his intention that history, in the sense of the study and use of past authors, must be used to enrich the understanding of the learner, and he used many examples of learned rulers, heaping them high atop one another, to underscore his contention that a prince ought to be learned.[7] This piling up of historical examples is so characteristic of De morali that if all such examples were deleted, the book would shrink to pamphlet size. The taking of history seriously in terms of critical method and subscribing to the exemplary view is part of the reason some

authors have seen Vincent as a forerunner of the Great Renaissance.

Another reason is his use of the classics. In De eruditione he recapitulated the Christian debate on the use of the pagan classics in education, recommending that selections and compendia be used (not surprising in one who depended heavily upon florilegia), but stopping short of Hugh of St. Victor's notion of allegorical interpretation. Since he quotes from the same chapter in which Hugh discussed interpretation, we may conclude that Vincent was familiar with it and actively preferrred the literal sense.[8] In any case, Vincent made his own peace with the pagan classics and though, as we've noted, he accorded them the lowest priority as sources, used them heavily. A full ten percent of De eruditione consists in four hundred and forty-one quotations from forty-five pagan authors. Forty-one of eighty-four non-scriptural authors cited in De morali are pagans and account for forty-three percent of the citations in the work.[9] This led Pierre Daunou to conclude that Vincent contributed more than anyone else in the Middle Ages to inspiring the taste for seeking out and studying the monuments of pagan literature, and Berchtold Ullman agreed with this estimate by citing Gustav Groeber's contention that after Vincent's work the recovery of classical antiquity by Petrarch and Boccacio is scarcely surprising, and terming Vincent a humanist rather than a scholastic![10] Perhaps this is drawing a long bow, but Vincent seems a genuine classicist in an age whose grasp of the classics was generally

tenuous.

Another area in which Vincent displayed educational creativity was in his notion of early home training. The topic of preschool training and formation, skimped by previous authors, was a necessity in a book by the educational advisor to a family with eleven children. It is the topic itself that is innovative rather than the method. The wellsprings of Vincent's educational thought were teaching for the intellect and discipline for the emotions. Since preschool education is in Vincent's view too early for intellectual training, he sees it as the time of instruction in virtue - which is the proper province of the parents - a process of restraining from evil and shaping towards good.[11] His comments upon gentleness, timeliness and restraint in corporal punishment certainly set him apart from other writers whose prescriptions for parental discipline were usually scanty and ill-advised.

The area in which Vincent is most innovative, however, is that of the education of women, and here the impact of practical reality is evident. Vincent devoted the last ten chapters of De eruditione to the education of women. Would he have done so had he not had to consider the everyday life of a real family? The tradition in which he wrote suggests not. It must be noted at once that he viewed the education of girls as different from that of boys. He begins with a disquisition on the preservation of chastity and never moves far beyond that point. In fact,

the educator who was so careful to urge restraint and even tenderness in punishing small children refers in this instance to Deuteronomy:

> If virginity is not found in s damsel (by her husband) she shall be brought outside the doors of her father's house and she shall be stoned with stones.[12]

While he gave twenty chapters to the intellectual education of boys, he devotes only one to that of girls, and follows the line that "they should be instructed in letters because often they will carefully shun harmful thoughts and follow this honorable occupation and avoid carnal lusts and vanitiee."[13] The rest of his treatment refers to moral instruction in chastity, humility, silence and maturity, coupled with railings against cosmetics and luxury. If his ideas are narrow, we must remember that he had little enough Christian writing to draw on, and that generally misogynist. Nor can he claim uniqueness in commenting on the education of women in an age in which twenty-one mistresses were licensed by the chanter of Notre Dame to furnish elementary instruction for girls. Yet it is worth noting that he departed dramatically from the practice of his age in writing extensively about female education and many Renaissance writers failed to improve upon his view.

Another thinker who deserves consideration for the creativity of his educational views within the context of Christian purposes is the Catalan, Ramon Lull (1236-1316), whose life goals included the pursuit of martyrdom, the writing of the best possible apolo-

getic treatise and the founding of language schools for the preparation of missionaries. It is the latter, of course, that recommends him to our attention. One scholar has noted that, among thirteenth century Christian scholars interested in Islam, Lull is "absolutely alone in adopting the mode of religious (as distinct from intellectual) thought of his interlocutors, the dialectic of the kalām" and in attaching "the greatest importance to Muslim attitudes, types of prayer, bodily postures, customs."[14] This alone is a rare sensitivity and would have made him an excellent conduit of intercultural contacts. Yet Lull was possessed by the dream of the reunification of all mankind in Christ to be achieved by reuniting the Roman and Orthodox churches and converting the Jews, the Muslims and other pagans. For this reason his account of Islam is biased despite his interest and cultural sympathy. For this reason also, he conceived of the plan of developing language schools. He actually founded a school of Arabic at Miramar in Mallorca through the largesse of James II of Mallorca to train thirteen friars in the Arabic tongue for missionary ends. Begun in 1276 with the formal approbation of Pope John XXI, it lasted until about 1293. We do not know how successful it was or whether it ever sent out any missionaries.[15] What is important is that it is a clear instance of an innovation in educational theory and practice necessitated by Christian purposes. Another instance of his innovation is in his successful petition to the

Council of Vienne (1311) to establish schools of Oriental languages and literature in order to prepare men for missionary work among Saracens and Jews. Canon Eleven of the Council created chairs of Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean at Rome, Bologna, Paris, Oxford and Salamanca.[16] In all this he was not creating ex nihilo. An Arabic school in Seville dated to 1254, twenty-one years before Miramar. Yet the power and precision of his thinking and the extraordinary energy he brought to the project of incarnating such schools is remarkable, all the more so in view of the fact that his pedagogical treatise, Doctrina pueril, is no more than a pleasant enough rehash of the most pedestrian of medieval educational prescriptions.[17]

Lull's closeness to the court of Philip the Fair may account for some of the ideas of Pierre Dubois, whom F.M. Powicke summed up as "a typical member of the brilliant crowd of mediocre men who were the mainstay of France in the reign of Philip the Fair, as of England under Elizabeth."[18] A Norman jurist, he authored De recuperatione terrae sanctae which distinguished him (if that is the mot juste) as a virulent royalist pamphleteer whose views often coincide with those of Nogaret. Sometimes they coincided with those of Lull, especially when his project of reconquering the Holy Land for the glory of God and of Philip led him to propose equal education of the sexes first in Latin, then in Greek, Arabic and other languages and in such practical arts as

medicine and surgery before sending them to the Holy Land for the care of souls. The education of women takes on an interesting twist in his thinking:

> Girls should be instructed in medicine and surgery and the subjects necessary as a preliminary to this. With such training and a knowledge of writing these girls - namely those of noble birth and others of exceptional skill who are attractive in face and figure - will be adopted as daughters and granddaughters by the greater princes of their own countries of the Holy Land and of other regimes adjacent thereto. They will . . . then conveniently be married off to the greater princes, clergy, and other wealthy Easterners . . . . Wives with such education . . . would teach their children and husbands to adhere to the Roman faith.[19]

In regard to the education of women, Dubois was clearly beyond his contemporaries in an age when women were generally excluded from university study, but he faltered in not recommending that they be admitted to the advanced schools he proposed for medicine, science, law and theology. Of course, he was not developing a theory of the education of women but proposing a novel strategy for crusade. Is this a Christian motivation or a secular one? A bit of both, surely, even if the weight of Dubois' thought was

really on secular advantage.

It should be apparent at this point that educational innovation was alive and well in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, even if not as robust as at other times. It chould also be clear that, whatever other motivations, political, economic or social may have served as engines of theoretical creativity in education, the problems of living the Christian faith ranked very high as stimuli. These three men are far from the only examples one could adduce in their age. Albertano di Brescia, Bellino Bissolo and Bonvoisin de Ripa spring to mind as others whose work would support this linkage of Christian motivation and educational innovation. But they will have to be the burden of another paper.

NOTES

[1]See for example Edward J. Power, Main Currents in the History of Education (2d ed.; N.Y., 1970), pp. 308-328.

[2]See Wilhelm Berges, Die Fuerstenspiegel des hohen und spaetern Mittelalters (Leipzig, 1938).

[3]The De morali principis institutione of Vincent de Beauvais, edited by Robert J. Schneider (U. of Notre Dame, 1965); De eruditione filiorum nobilium, edited by Arpad Steiner (Cambridge, Mass., 1938). Quotations from the latter will be taken from the English translation, Vincent of Beauvais On the Education of Noble Childreen, translated by William Ellwood Craig (U. of California at Los Angeles, 1949).

[4]Pierre C.F. Daunou, "Vincent de Bauvais," Histoire Littéraire de la France. Vol. XVIII: Suite du treizième siècle jusqu'a l'an 1255 (Paris, 1835, pp. 446-519), p. 454; B.L. Ullman, "A Project for a New Edition of Vincent of Beauvais," Speculum, VII (1933), 312.

[5]Vincent de Beauvais, Speculum maius, Generalis Prologus, xii.

[6]John Ellis Bourne, The Educational Thought of Vincent of Beauvais. (Harvard, 1960), pp. 83, 91.

[7]De morali, XV, 83-146, pp. 117-120.

[8]De eruditione, XVI, pp. 58-62 [On the Education of Noble CHildren, pp. 185-190].

[9]Bourne, Appendices V-VI, pp. 226-231; Schneider in De Morali, Index Citationum Scriptorum, pp. 219-230.

[10]Daunou, p. 485; Ullman, pp. 324-325. The reference is to Gustav Groeber, Uebersicht ueber die lateinische Literatur von der Mitte des VI. Jahrhunderts bis zur Mitte des XIV Jahrhunderts. (New ed.; Munich, 1963).

[11]De eruditione, I and XXIII, pp. 5-8, 47-53, 78-93 [On the Education of Noble Children, pp. 106-110, 216-224.

[12]Deuteronomy XX:20-21. De eruditione, XLII, 41-42, p. 174 [On the Education of Noble Children, p. 369].

[13]De eruditione, XLIII, 5-7, p. 176 [On the Education of Noble Children, pp. 373-374.

[14]D. Urvoy, Penser l'Islam: Les présupposés islamiques de l'"Art" de Lull (Paris, 1980), p. 84.

[15]E. Allison Peers, Ramon Lull: A Biography (London, 1929), pp. 128-135.

[16]J. N. Hillgarth, Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth-Century France (Oxford, 1971), p. 128.

[17]Peers, pp. 124-127; Miguel Cruz Hernández, El pensamiento de Ramón Lull (Madrid, 1977), pp.222-231. See also J. Tusquets, Ramón Lull, pedagogo de la cristianidad (Madrid, 1954).

[18]F.M. Powicke, "Pierre Dubois: Medieval Radical," in T.F. Tout and James Tait, Historical Essays by members of the Owens College, Manchester (London, 1902, pp. 169-190), p. 173.

[19]Pierre Dubois, The Recovery of the Holy Land, translated by Walther I. Brandt (N.Y., 1956), pp. 118-119.